



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No. 16-155

November 28, 2016

MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

BOARD OF EDUCATION HOLDS STUDY SESSION ON CHARTER SCHOOLS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Board of Education heard a lot about charter schools during a special study session on the topic today in Frankfort. An overflow crowd, including many local district superintendents attended. The board did not take any action.

Currently 43 states and the District of Columbia have laws allowing public charter schools. Kentucky does not. Charters differ from other public schools in that the authorizer and charter operator enter into a performance-based contract, or charter, that spells out the school's governance, funding, accountability and flexibility, among other things.

During the session, the board learned that great variation exists among public charter school laws including:

- the chartering authorizer (local board of education, state board of education, chief state school officer, higher education institutions, non-profits, independent charter boards, municipal governments)
- the number of charters allowed and their location
- the type of charter schools allowed (start-up, public school conversion or virtual school)
- who can hold a charter (a non-profit charter management organization – CMO, a for-profit education management organization – EMO, or another entity)
- how long the charter is valid and the renewal or revocation terms
- the funding formula (per pupil, a percentage of state and local funding, grants, special funding, private donations)

A representative from the Education Commission of the States presented an overview of charters nationwide, and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence presented highlights from its report [Exploring Charter Schools in Kentucky](#).

Dr. Margaret Raymond from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University presented a major research study on charter schools. While outcomes differed from state to state and city to city, the study concluded that:

- based on academic growth on tests, charter schools best serve black students, English learners and students living in poverty
- charter schools that typically work well are in urban areas, have strong human capital systems, a blend of new school culture and focused instruction, and the opportunity for knowledge transfer
- charter school quality is set early in the operating life of the school and is controlled and driven by the authorizing entity

Dr. Joseph Waddington, an assistant professor in the Educational Policy Studies & Evaluation area at the University of Kentucky, told the board about a number of other studies that looked at charter schools and how they performed.

(more)

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed

“Charters could be one tool in the utility belt,” Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said, “but no one thing is going to address our achievement gap, unless maybe every single person in the Commonwealth decided, this is my problem – we could wipe out achievement gaps, we could wipe out low-performing schools, but that is going to be a hard lift.”

The board did spend some time discussing the pros and cons of who should authorize charter schools and whether there should be multiple authorizers, if Kentucky allows charters.

Ultimately, the board directed the commissioner to provide additional information on successful charter schools, how they are chartered, various providers who run them, the flexibility they have, how they are funded and how successful they are at closing the achievement gap. Also, the board asked for a draft policy on charter schools that it could consider for Kentucky at its next meeting.

The board’s next regular meeting is December 7, at which time members are expected to make a decision on whether to add charter schools to the board’s legislative agenda.

Supporting materials used during the study session are available on the board’s web portal at <http://portal.ksba.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=4388&AgencyTypeID=1>.

###